(c) to (f) Ministry of Tourism, through its Indiatourism offices overseas is undertaking a series of promotional activities with the objective of increasing foreign tourist arrivals. These activities include, advertising, participation in travel fairs, exhibitions, road shows, India evenings, seminars & workshops, Indian food and cultural festivals; publication of brochures, inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry.

In addition, a "Visit India 2009" Scheme has been announced by the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel to India during the current year.

The Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism has been expanded so as to provide financial assistance to service providers for the promotion of Medical, Convention & Conference in the country.

Due to various measures taken, the negative growth rate in FTAs observed till May, 2009 in the current year has become positive in June, 2009. This trend is likely to continue in coming months also resulting in larger number of FTAs in the county.

Medical Tourism

671. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether India ranks second in world medical tourism;

(b) if so, whether India spends less than 1.2 per cent of GDP on health sector, but it takes enough care while caring for foreign patients with the result that the country had attained No.2 rank in world in medical tourism with Thailand leading the pack in 2007;

(c) whether Indian hospitals treated 4.5 lakh patients from other countries compared to Thailand's 12 lakh; and

(d) if so, to what extent Government has been able to retain this position and the total number of medical assistance provided to tourists from various countries?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (d) Ministry of Tourism does not collect separate information on medical tourist traffic to India.

Government of India has taken various measures to promote Medical Tourism in the country. These include extending financial support under the Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme to Medical Tourism Service Providers and Medical Tourism Facilitators for promotion of Medical Tourism in overseas markets, introduction of an additional category of 'Medical Visa' for foreign tourists coming to India for medical treatment, production of publicity material on Medical Tourism and dissemination of information on Medical Tourism through the India tourism offices and on the website of the Ministry of Tourism, The specific promotions are also being undertaken through Indiatourism offices in overseas markets by participation in various international fairs.